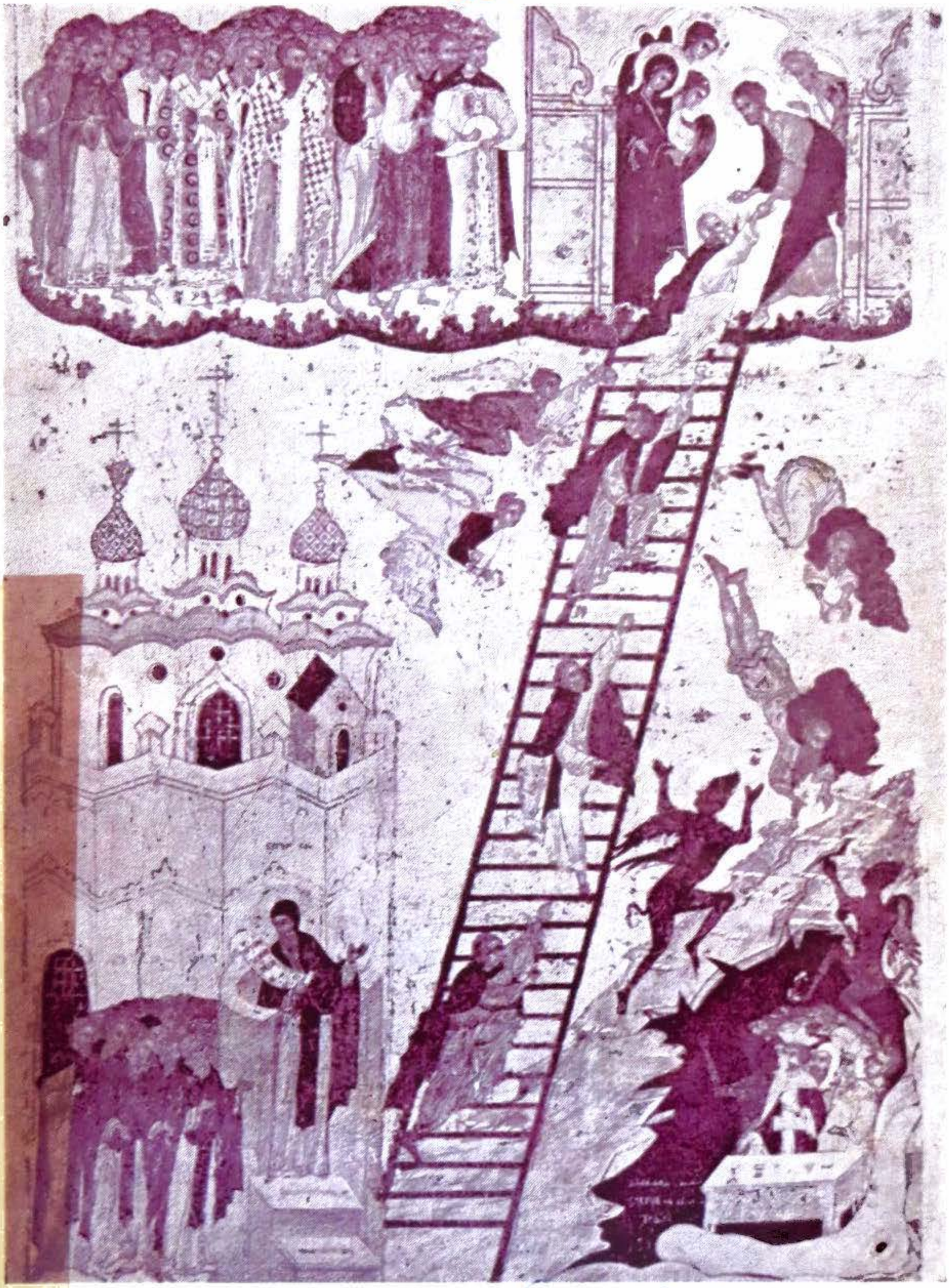
# THE ORTHODOX WORD

JULY - AUGUST, 1969 SEVENTY - FIVE CENTS



David

# THE ORTHODOX WORD

*A BIMONTHLY PERIODICAL*

1969 Vol. 5, No. 4 (27)

July - August

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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COVER: Vision of the Heavenly Ladder (Icon of Moscow School, 16th century). St. John Climacus stands at the foot of the Ladder, guiding monks up its steps.

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# *The Canonization of Father Herman of Alaska*

UKASE No. 748 OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

To the Most Reverend Anthony,
Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America

ON AUGUST 23 (September 5), 1969, we heard the report of the Chairman concerning the fact that, in connection with the letter of inquiry of May 14 (27), 1969, sent to all the Most Reverend Members of the Sobor of Bishops, concerning the canonization of the revered and truly righteous Alaskan Missionary and Elder, Monk Herman, up to the present time a majority of positive replies has been received from our Episcopate, and therefore it is necessary now to decide this question and select a Committee which should be commissioned to prepare the publication of a Life and the compilation of a Service, and to work out a plan for the celebration of the canonization.

*WE HAVE DECREED:*

1. Acknowledging the evident sanctity of Elder Herman, who has already long been revered in Alaska as a locally venerated Saint, and whose canonization was decided upon by the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in 1939,-- to celebrate his solemn Church canonization on Sunday, July 27 (August 9), 1970, in the

(Continued on inside back cover.)

3 (16) September, 1969 New York City

Chairman of the Synod of Bishops † *Metropolitan Philaret*
Secretary † *Bishop Laurus*

# THE SURETY OF SINNERS

*Commemorated March 7*

## TROPARION, TONE 4

AN HONORABLE dwelling hast Thou been* of the unutterable Divine Nature beyond words and above the mind,* and art for sinners a Surety,* granting grace and healing,* as the Mother of Him Who rules all,* pray to Thy Son* that we may receive mercy in the Day of Judgement.

*THE MIRACULOUS ICONS*
*OF THE MOTHER OF GOD*

# THE SURETY OF SINNERS

*Translated from the weekly bulletin of the Shanghai "Surety of Sinners" Cathedral, No. 361, March 6, 1939, edited by Archbishop John Maximovitch.*

IN HER ICON, "Surety of Sinners," the Mother of God is represented in half stature; with Her left hand She embraces the God-Child, Who holds Her right hand with both His hands in such a way that Her thumb is in His right hand and Her small finger and the one next to it are in His left hand, resembling what is done when one goes surety for another. On their heads are crowns with jewels and precious stones. In a semicircle around the faces of the Mother of God and the God-Child are twelve stars -- six on each side. In the four corners of the Icon are depicted scrolls with the words (above): "I am the Surety of sinners for My Son," "Who has entrusted Me to hear them"; (below) "and they who will bring Me the joy of hearing them," "will receive through Me eternal rejoicing."

It is not known when or by whom the image of the Mother of God was made in such a manner, nor where this Icon was first revealed. It is presumed that the basis of such a representation of the Mother of God is to be found in the words of the akathist to the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God: *Rejoice, Thou Who offerest Thy hands in surety for us to God.* It is known only that the glorification of the Icon of the Mother of God under the title of "Surety of Sinners" first began in the St. Nicholas Monastery in Ordin in the diocese of Orel.

For a very long time this Icon remained unknown and disdained. It stood between two ancient icons in an old chapel beyond the monastery gates, and it was so faded and covered with dust that it was not possible to read the inscriptions on it.

In the summer of 1844 there came to the monastery at Ordin a merchant's wife, Pochepina, with her two-year-old son, who was subject

to terrible attacks which would not yield to any medical means, and she requested a moleben to be served before the Icon, "Surety of Sinners," which was in the chapel. The moleben was served and the sick son of Pochepina became well. After this the Icon of the Mother of God was transferred to the monastery and put in a good place in the church. Soon other miraculous signs followed from it, and from that time the Icon of the Mother of God in the St. Nicholas Monastery of Ordin became glorified as miraculous. The Icon appeared just on the eve of a terrible epidemic of cholera in the city of Orel and nearby. Then multitudes, not only of the well but of the sick as well, flocked to the Icon of the Mother of God and, notwithstanding the terrible contagiousness of the disease, not one who came died of it. When the Icon was carried to the city of Orel, the cholera ceased entirely there.

## *THE MOSCOW (KHAMOVNIKI) ICON*

In 1846 a hieromonk of the Ordin monastery was sent to Moscow in order to have made a *riza* (covering) for the miraculous Icon. From a feeling of love for travelers a Lieutenant-Colonel D.H. Boncheskul gave shelter to this monk. In gratitude for his hospitality there was sent to him from the Ordin monastery a faithful copy of the miraculous Icon in the same form and the same size, namely 17½ inches long and 14 inches wide. This Icon was placed together with the other icons in the house icon-corner. At Easter, 1848, Boncheskul began to notice that about the Icon there flashed an extraordinary glitter, a wonderful fragrance exuded and drops of an oil-like moisture appeared, with which the sick were anointed and they received healing. From all sides the sick began to flock; they prayed before the Icon and received healing.

On the 30th of May, 1848, Boncheskul gave this Icon, the "Surety of Sinners," to the parish church at Khamovniki in Moscow, where it was placed on a stand near the kliros. Soon, in the sanctuary of this church, extraordinary manifestations of light began to come from behind the altar, in the form of appearing and disappearing stars, which many saw through a window in the sanctuary. (Poselyanin, in his book on the Icons of the Mother of God, gives full information on the police investigation of this, which confirmed the extraordinary nature of these manifestations.) The emission of the oil-like moisture continued; a deacon who was stationed next to the Icon wiped the moisture with cotton and distributed it to the people. More important than anything else in the glorification of the Icon were the numerous grace-giving signs: healings from illnesses, deliverance from the cholera which raged

in 1848, from severe seizures and various other illnesses. The following are a few of the many miracles that occurred at this time.

1. On the 21st of July, 1848, the wife of Captain A.P. Ushakov, Maria Pavlovna, reported that, having come from Yaroslavl to Moscow, she had been in the St. Nicholas church at Khamovniki and, seeing that the Icon of the Mother of God "Surety of Sinners" was painted in naturalistic and not ancient style, doubted that miracles could occur from such an icon; nonetheless she took oil from the lamp. At home, at midnight she had terrible fits of cholera that lasted until 5 a.m. She drank of the oil taken from the lamp and smeared herself with it, and at the same time began to pray mentally before the Icon of the "Surety of Sinners" and beg forgiveness for her sin of disbelief. The Queen of Heaven heard her prayer. On the spot the sick woman felt relief and soon was healed.

2. Lieutenant D.I.Chernyaev of the Uglich Chasseurs was so dangerously ill with cholera for four days in July that his tongue began to grow numb and his whole body darkened; the doctors could do nothing. Abandoning medicine, he began to drink holy water and rub himself with cotton that had oil from the Icon of the Mother of God "Surety of Sinners," and soon he became well.

3. Evfimia Pavlova, 26 years old, a peasant woman of the village of Mironovo, Klin district, suffered from seizures. When she heard that they wanted to take her to Moscow to the Icon of the Mother of God "Surety of Sinners," she became so frightened that she ran off into the forest, from where they were scarcely able to drag her, and she was brought bound to Moscow. About two miles from Moscow she began to weep and sob, and when on the 23rd of June she was brought into the church of the Image of the Mother of God, she felt herself as if in fire. She was the same on the 24th, but on the 25th she became better, and soon she was completely healed.

This Icon of the "Surety of Sinners" remains to this day[1] as it was before, not decorated by a covering, although there have been many who were zealous to make a most elaborate covering for it. It is affirmed that Boncheskul, who donated the Icon, had a vision that this Icon should not be covered with a *riza*. The yearly commemoration of the Icon is made in the St.Nicholas church at Khamovniki on Thursday of the week of All Saints, and likewise on March 7. The local clergy and

1. The Khamovniki church is one of the few churches "functioning" today in Moscow -- *i.e.*, open, with services being conducted regularly (*ed note*).

parishioners requested permission for one of the wings of this church to be renamed in honor of the Mother of God "Surety of Sinners."

Copies of the miraculous Icon spread in a short time throughout the whole of Russia. Churches are adorned with this Icon. In many families they are entrusted in blessing to close ones on special occasions: when children are let to go to distant lands, when daughters are given in marriage, or sons marry.

## *THE KYAKHTA ICON IN SIBERIA*

In February, 1854, the same D.H. Boncheskul who had given his Icon of the "Surety of Sinners" to his parish church of St. Nicholas in Moscow, sent another exact copy of this Icon to Kyakhta, in the region of Siberia beyond the Baikal, entrusting it to the Kyakhta merchant L. T.Molchanov to give it to the Holy Trinity Cathedral of St. Sava's Holy Trinity Monastery. The reason for this he explained in a special letter: "There is much which the human mind cannot fathom. The will of the living Lord God is performed where He pleases. In accordance with this will, unfathomable to us mortals, I saw a vision in sleep: I was to place a copy of the miraculous Icon "Surety of Sinners" in your Holy Trinity-St. Sava Cathedral. I saw a fiery pillar above this church, extending from the church dome to the heavens, and I heard a voice from a monk standing near me, saying that I should take into this church an Icon of the 'Surety of Sinners.' I asked what church this was, and in reply it was said: the Holy Trinity-St. Sava Cathedral."

From the time it was placed in the Holy Trinity-St. Sava Cathedral, grace-giving signs began to be manifested from the Icon. Besides an extraordinary manifestation of light, which illuminated the cathedral while only a single lamp was burning before the Icon, there began to be performed miracles of healing of the suffering and of those who came with faith to God's mercy. Christians and pagans of the region beyond Baikal and other remote lands hastened in illnesses to the aid of the Mother of God, and through anointment by oil from the lamp hanging before the Icon they began to receive healing from afflictions. Icons of the "Surety of Sinners" have been spread in great numbers beyond the Baikal and along the Chinese border, both in churches and in homes.

From the notes of the cathedral clergy a whole record has been compiled of the miracles of this Icon of the Mother of God. This record, entitled, "Description of miracles and healings from the Icon of the Mother of God 'Surety of Sinners' in the province of Kyakhta in the Holy Trinity-St. Sava Cathedral," is to be found in a special manuscript

preserved in the cathedral. Such an abundance of miracles and benefactions of the Queen of Heaven beyond the Baikal inspired the desire to erect a church of the "Surety of Sinners" on the place of the manifestation of such grace-giving signs. The pious benefactor of churches and missions, Y. A. Nemchinov, was destined to perform this deed. His only son, Andrew, was critically ill, and through anointment with oil from the lamp that burned constantly before the Icon of the "Surety of Sinners" in the cathedral, he received healing; then Nemchinov gave a vow to build a wing of the cathedral in honor of the "Surety of Sinners," which was done. (Excerpts from a book by S. Snessoreva.)

## *ICONS OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA*

Outside of Russia a copy of the Icon was sent from Mt. Athos to the holy Archbishop Simon, head of the Chinese Mission, who began the building of a large cathedral dedicated to that Icon in Shanghai. The late Archbishop John Maximovitch completed the cathedral, which became the site of God's great deeds of mercy bestowed through the prayers of the righteous hierarch.

A large copy of the Icon is located today in the new San Francisco Cathedral before the left kliros. As a recent example of the mercy of the Mother of God shown through this Icon, here is the testimony of a young woman, Marina Aronstam, who was mysteriously brought to the truth of Orthodoxy out of the darkness of Protestantism and found the Mother of God to be truly a Surety to herself, an unenlightened sinner: "About the first part of March, 1966, I dreamed that a boy I knew back in high school was killed and I ran into a church I've never seen before and I knelt and put my head to the floor before a large Icon of the Mother of God. And I started praying for the forgiveness of this young man's sins. Being a Protestant, prostrating and praying for the dead in front of an icon -- all this was very strange and new to me. All of a sudden I felt a great force pulling me up; I looked up and saw that the Mother of God was holding a glass and this glass was filled with Her tears and as the tears fell they became crystals. And She gave it to me. I felt so happy words can never express it, and I ran out of the church carrying the glass with Her tears. Outside the sun was shining and everything was green and exceptionally beautiful as I had never seen before. And I woke up. Some time later I entered the Russian Cathedral on Geary Boulevard and was stunned to see the same church and Icon -- the Surety of Sinners -- which I saw in my dream. Shortly after that I became Orthodox and was baptized in the same church and in front of the same Icon."

# *The Appearance of the Most Holy Mother of God at Zeytoon, Egypt*

By FAYEK M. ISHAK, Ph. D.
Associate Professor of English
Lakehead University at Port Arthur, Ontario, Canada

*IN OUR DAYS, too, the Most Holy Mother of God has seen fit to reveal Her mercies to the sinful hnman race. Her remarkable appearances at Zeytoon since April 2 of last year have been attended by many of the same signs -- in particular by miraculous healings -- that have accompanied Her manifestations and miraculous Icons in past centuries. Although the appearances have occurred in a Coptic church not in communion with the Orthodox Churches, they are already widely accepted in Orthodox circles as genuine. Occurring as they do on the path the Holy Family followed in their flight into Egypt, the full meaning of these apparitions is perhaps hidden from us; but if one sees them in conjunction with recent events in the Holy Land and the Near East, one glimpses at least a hint as to their apocalyptic nature.*

*The following report was written by an Egyptian professor now living in Canada, and is based on correspondence with his relatives and friends in Egypt, official statements of the Coptic Patriarchate which he has translated, and articles from a weekly Coptic newspaper published in Cairo,* Watani (*'My Motherland'*). *The photographs were supplied by him also and are, to the best of his knowledge, genuine.*

ON MARCH 30, 1969, the Coptic Church added the following statement to its annals (calendar), which include the lives of its saints and the important occurrences that take place in the Church:

"Today is the 24th of Baramhat, the feast of the Holy Mother's appearance at Her church of Zeytoon near Cairo.

"On a similar day in 1684 of the Coptic Martyrs, *i.e.*, April 2, 1968 (*Anno Domini*), which is the tenth year of Pope Cyril VI's accession, the 116th Patriarch of the Alexandrian Holy See, the Virgin Mother appeared in full illumination in the Coptic church that is named after Her and that looks over Touman Bey Street at Zeytoon, a suburb of Cairo.

*The Apparition of the Most Holy Mother of God at Zeytoon --*
*as photographed during one of its actual occurrences in 1968*

"Her appearance has occurred at night on various occasions and in different forms. Sometimes She has appeared in full stature, at others only in half stature. She has always been bathed in a luminous halo of dazzling brightness. In some cases She has come through the openings of the domes of the church, but mostly She has moved above them, bending Her head and blessing the vast multitudes by raising both hands. She would bow in front of the higher cross that was then radiating with very bright light. At other times She has appeared in the form of lights or whitish clouds preceded by the bursting forth of spiritual beings like divine doves that flew at high speed. In duration the holy appearance has lasted for long periods that were occasionally extended to two hours and a quarter, as on that night [April 30, 1968] during which She appeared fully in unfailing lustre between 2:45 and 5:00 a.m.

"This appearance has been witnessed by thousands of citizens, by many religious dignitaries, scientists and many other people who stated in emphatic certainty that the occurrence is exceptionally distinct in its nature.

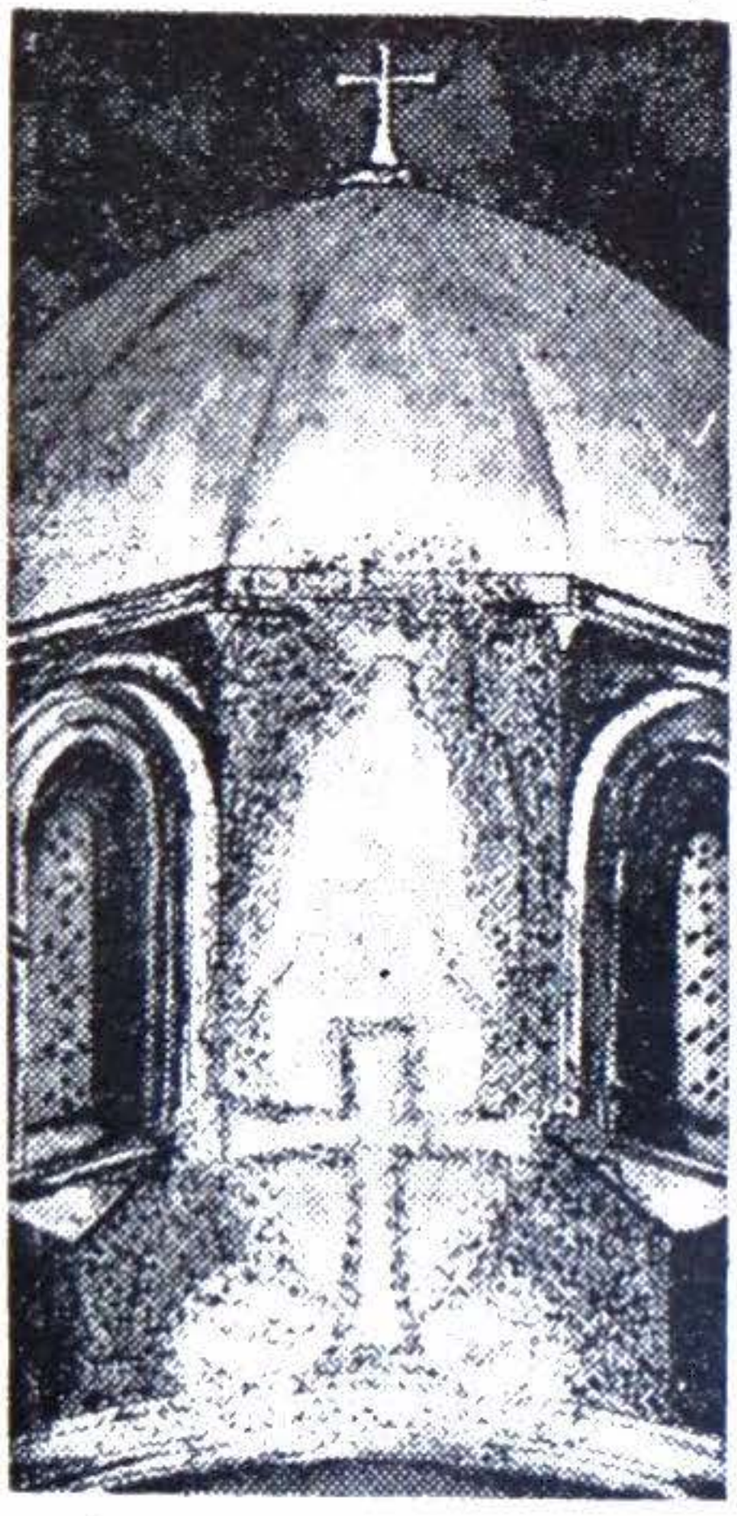
"Several wonderful and miraculous recoveries occurred to vast multitudes of sick people who were suffering from incurable diseases that medicine fell short of curing. This was scientifically proven unanimously by group testimonies.

"A year has now elapsed since Her first appearance and still She appears even to this very day.

"Grant, O Lord, that this would be a symbol of peace to the whole world; grant that it would mark the prosperity of our lands and our blessed nation through the intercession of Thy spotless Mother. For Thine is the glory, forever. Amen."

THE CHURCH of Zeytoon (*i.e.*, the Olive) is only a few yards away from the suburban line which runs from Cairo to Shebin in the U. A. R. The church which is named after our Holy Mother is at the corner of Touman Bey Street and Ibrahim Khalil Street.

The first apparition of the Virgin Mary occurred above the domes of the church on April 2, 1968, at 8:30 p.m., and it was witnessed by a group of municipal garage technicians. As the brightness of the apparition became gradually more and more dazzling, a larger number joined the first group of people. Some of them informed the curate who lives in this vicinity that a certain lady all clad in white was seen above the domes of the church and she looked as if she was about to commit suicide!



*A view of one apparition, reproduced exactly from the Cairo newspaper* Watani

The apparition of the Mother of God has occurred many times since that date. Her head is usually covered with a white veil and She holds an olive branch in Her hand. As She tours very slowly the four domes of the church, twelve doves become visible in the form of whitish or light grayish clouds. An illuminated semi-circular frame appears at first and is then gradually transformed into a complete "phosphoric" circle surrounding the whole of the divine scene, which is now all bathed in an unusually luminous halo. By this time the apparition is visible to everybody near the church.

A few moments before the occurrence of the holy apparition, the people witness a star moving westwards and followed by a reddish column all aflame. The column stations on the northwestern dome of the church and is gradually transformed into the visible apparition of the Virgin Mary. When the apparition vanishes, the star resumes its journey back towards the East.

The holy appearance, which is still witnessed up to the moment of writing these lines, having occurred a number of times in almost every month since its beginning, always at night, normally lasts from two to forty minutes. Only twice it did appear for longer periods: on April 2, 1968, it lasted for two hours, and on April 30, 1968, for two hours and a half.

It is amazing how some of the intimate friends and relatives of the present writer saw the Holy Mother raise Her hands high up as if She is praying and then bend Her head in glorified silence to bless the vast multitudes, who are about ten thousand at a time.

The apparition of the Mother of God has been seen by Moslems as well as Christians. It has been witnessed not by a single individual, but by the vast majority of those many thousands who had the resolute will and inclination to spend a sleepless night near the church. It has appeared too to the devout as well as the agnostic, to the believer as well as the blasphemous.

THESE APPEARANCES of the Mother of God have been associated with the actual healing of diseases and recovery from physical disabilities. The blind, the deaf and the dumb who were well-known in the neighborhood, have had their sight, hearing and speaking miraculously restored. Others who suffered the loss of one talent or another for many years, could now enjoy the blessings of health.

These people felt an unusually powerful sensation running through their veins and convulsing the whole of their being. Miss Madiha Said, for example, a third-year student of the Helmich Training School in Cairo, tells us that she lost her sight and became also totally dumb as a result of a severe psychic schock. The ophthalmologist cited the cause of this as neurasthenia (*i.e.*, nervous disorder). Here is a literal translation of Miss Said's own description of her healing: "I felt an inner power contracting my muscles and shaking every part of my body. In an instant I felt as if tiny and soft scales were falling from my eyes. The first thing that I saw was the apparition of the Virgin Mary. Then I

cried, 'O, Mary! O, Mary!'" This miraculous incident took place in the Zeytoonian church on June 5, 1968, at 2 a.m.

It is also amazing how people who suffered from leprosy, semi or total paralysis, blood cancer and several other dangerous diseases, were miraculously cured. The most moving and heart-rending example is that of a lady in her late sixties, Madame Amira Gobriel, who has been suffering from liver, kidney, and heart diseases for the last fifteen years. Three years ago, moreover, cancer and arteriosclerosis (*i.e.*, thickening and hardening of the arteries) were added to the list. Most of the medical specialists who examined her concluded that any operation would mean her imminent death.

On July 21, 1968, she accompanied her brother and went to Zeytoon. There she was miraculously cured even before the occurrence of the Holy Mother's apparition at 12:15 a.m. the next day. She felt as if an electric current was running through the weakened tissues of her body. And for the first time after the lapse of those long years, she stood up alone without the help of any member of her family.

When she visited again the specialists who used to take care of her, they all reported that she had completely recovered. Immediately she threw away the drugs as she no longer needed them.

There have been miracles outside the immediate neighborhood of the church of Zeytoon also. The miraculous recovery of Mr. Wagdy Nabil Tewfik is worth mentioning. This young man, a University student, had been ill for seventeen years. He was suffering from severe pains in the joints, the abdomen and the chest. His case as diagnosed by many physicians was hopeless. It so happened that on December 30, 1968, as he was praying near the picture of the Mother of God in his private room, he witnessed the burning of incense in front of the picture. When his mother smelled the fragrance of the burning incense, she came to ask him whether he had brought it with him; he told her that he had not.

In the evening of the same day he witnessed with the rest of his family that the whole picture was suddenly illumined and certain shreds of blazing light were coming out of it. He immediately felt that his severe pains were diminished. The next morning was for him, in every way, the beginning of a new life... a life full of joy, happiness and the blessings of health.

Also, a lady named Julia Gobrial had been suffering for a year and a half from severe pains from inflammations in her liver, the blind and large intestines. All medical reports and X-rays stressed the immediate necessity of two operations. Only a few hours before the first oper-

ation, she saw at night the apparition of the Holy Mother of God all ablaze and surrounded by three glittering stars. Madam Julia could not help crying. At dawn she saw the Holy Mother again in full stature approaching her and stroking very softly the inflamed parts. In the morning she mentioned that she felt very well and the physicians decided that she no longer needed the operations.

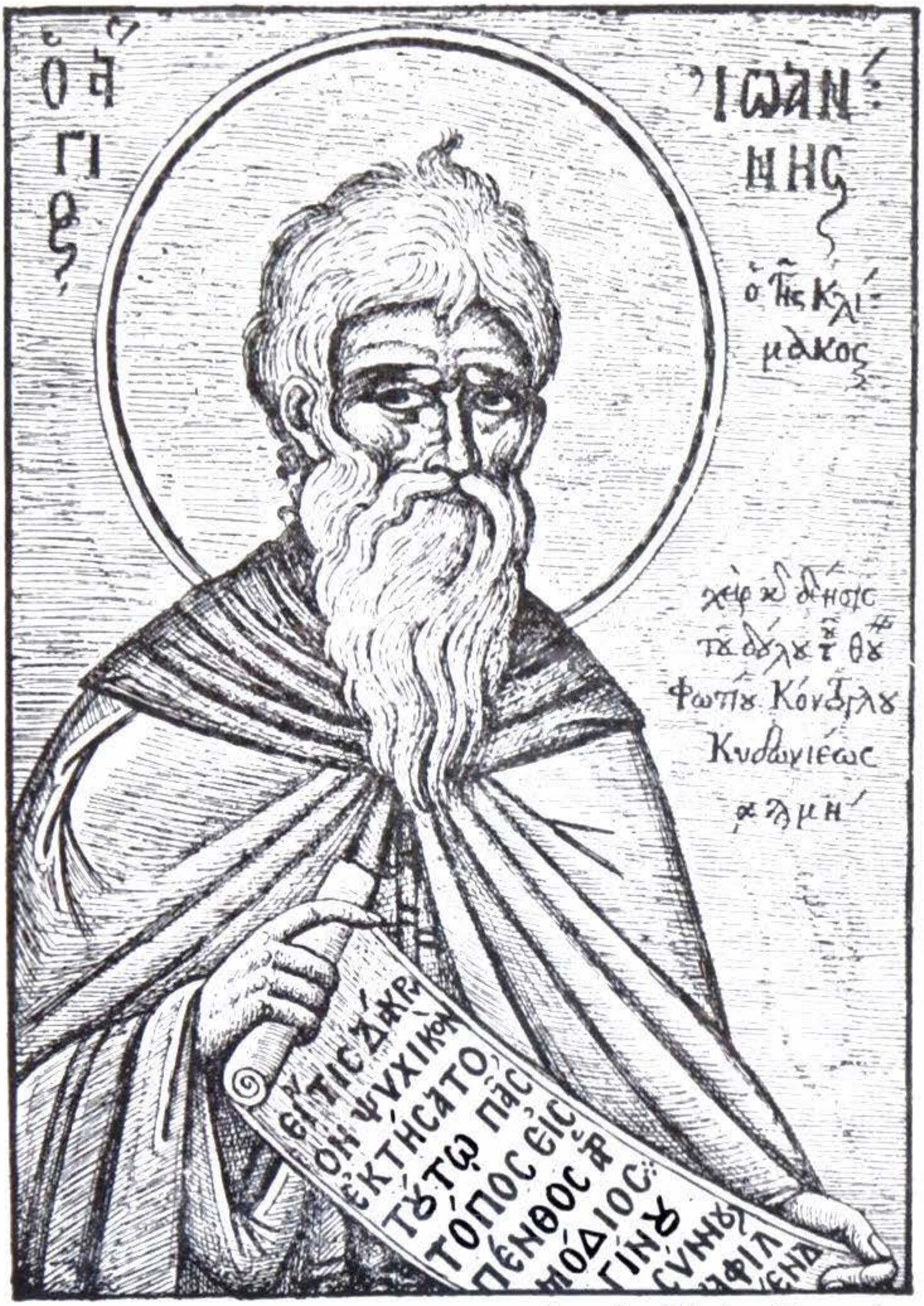
Even more bewildering than the appearances of the Mother of God is the report of the Coptic Patriarchate (Cairo) about the miracle of Sunday, July 7, 1968, and the appearance at dawn of the Holy Family above the domes of the Zeytoonian church in the form of a luminous picture figuring the Blessed Mother as She was holding the Hand of Her Infant Jesus Christ. Beside them were Joseph and the ass.

Here it is worth remarking that the close approximation between the church of Zeytoon and the place where the Holy Family sojourned during their flight to Egypt, is not a mere coincidence. The picture is reminiscent of the whole mystery of the Nativity and the wisdom of the escape from Herod and the mass butchery of infants. Not far away from the church of Zeytoon, in the suburb of Matarieh, is the tree under which the Holy Family rested for a while. This tree is still budding and blooming, as green and fresh as ever.

The miraculous apparition and the great multitudes that gather every evening before the church at Zeytoon have led to several special measures. In addition to the daily morning and evening services, every evening at about nine o'clock an Icon Procession begins from the altar and goes around the whole premises. The procession normally includes a bishop, archpriests, priests and deacons holding icons of the Most Holy Mother of God. Also, a local broadcasting station has been installed in the premises of the church of Zeytoon; it is run by Mr. Malak Eryan, who is also the Director of the Pharaonic Institute of Coptic Music. Prayers, hymns, sermons and news about the miracles that take place are broadcast every Thursday and Saturday from 9 p.m. until 4 a.m. the following day, Cairo local time. The Egyptian Ministry of Information and Tourism is at present studying the plans that would make of the Zeytoonian church and its surroundings an international shrine for pilgrimage.

*...And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.*

St. Luke 21:11




*Icon by Photios Kontoglou*

# SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS

*Commemorated March 30th*

## KONTAKION, TONE 1

AS EVER-BLOSSOMING FRUITS thou offerest teachings from thy book, O most wise one,* and delightest the hearts of those who accept them in sobriety, O blessed one:* for a ladder is it, leading up from earth to heavenly and enduring glory* the souls of those who venerate thee with faith.

# The Life of
# ST. JOHN CLIMACUS
## AND THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

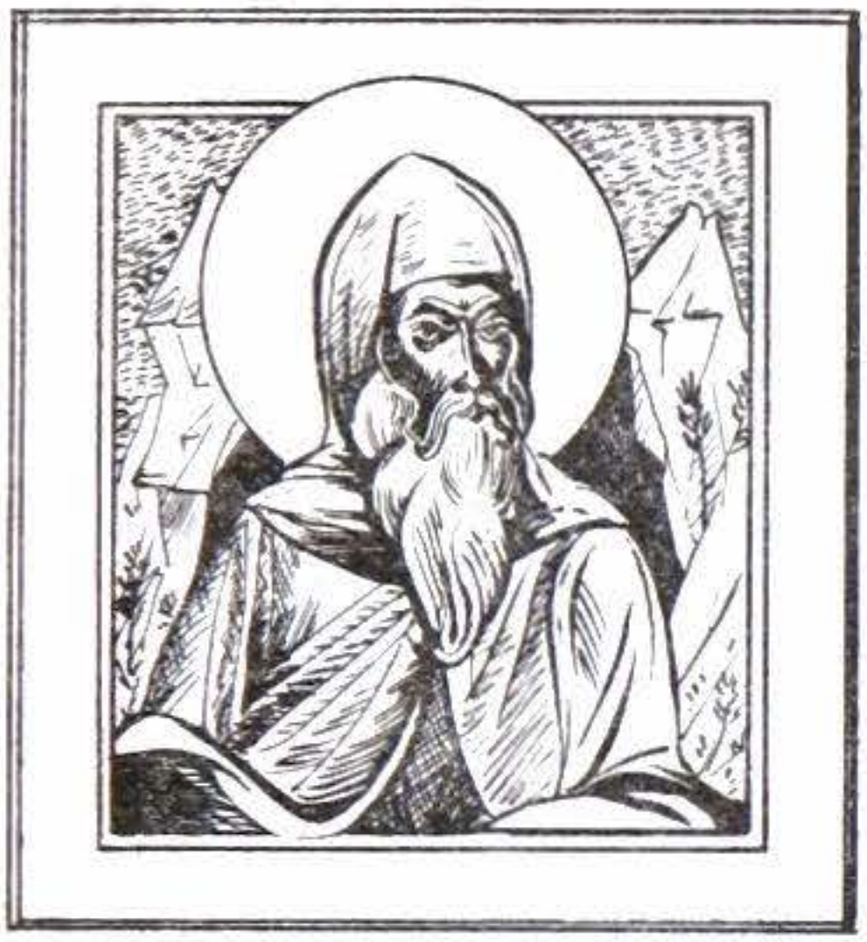
By Prof. I. M. KONTZEVITCH

ST. JOHN was born, most likely, in Constantinople about 525. He received a good education, for which he was subsequently called *Scholasticus*. At the age of 16 he went to Sinai, entirely submitted himself to the Elder Martyrius and had no will of his own. At the age of 20 he was tonsured by his elder.

The region of the holy Mount of Sinai served already in the 4th century as the dwelling of a multitude of anchorites, drawn there both by the sacred remembrance of the Old Testament miracles which had been performed there, and of the Prophets Moses and Elias, and by the silence of these mountains and valleys and the fact that the whole peninsula was nearly uninhabited. At first the Sinai anchorites had no common monastery: they lived in cells scattered about the mountains and valleys, and only on Saturday evening did they assemble in the church which had been built, according to tradition, by the Empress St. Helena in the 4th century on the site of God's appearance to the Prophet Moses in the Burning Bush. In this church the anchorites spent the whole night in prayer together, on Sunday morning they communicated of the Holy Mysteries, and again dispersed to their cells. In the 4th and 5th centuries the anchorites of Sinai were often subjected to attacks by Saracens, from which many received also a martyr's death. Therefore, when the pious Emperor Justinian ascended the throne, the Sinai fathers, having heard of his piety toward holy places, begged him to build a fortified monastery for them. St. Justinian heard their petition, and at his com-

mand at the base of Mount Sinai a monastery was erected, the same that exists on this very place to the present day.[1]

A monk of Sinai relates: "Once Abba Martyrius came with Abba John [Climacus] to Anastasius the Great; and the latter looked at them and said to Abba Martyrius: 'Tell me, Abba Martyrius, where is this youth from, and who tonsured him?' He replied: 'He is your slave, Father, and I tonsured him.' Anastasius said to him: 'O, Abba Martyrius, who would have thought that you would tonsure the abbot of Sinai?' And the holy man was not mistaken."



*St. Anastasius of Sinai*

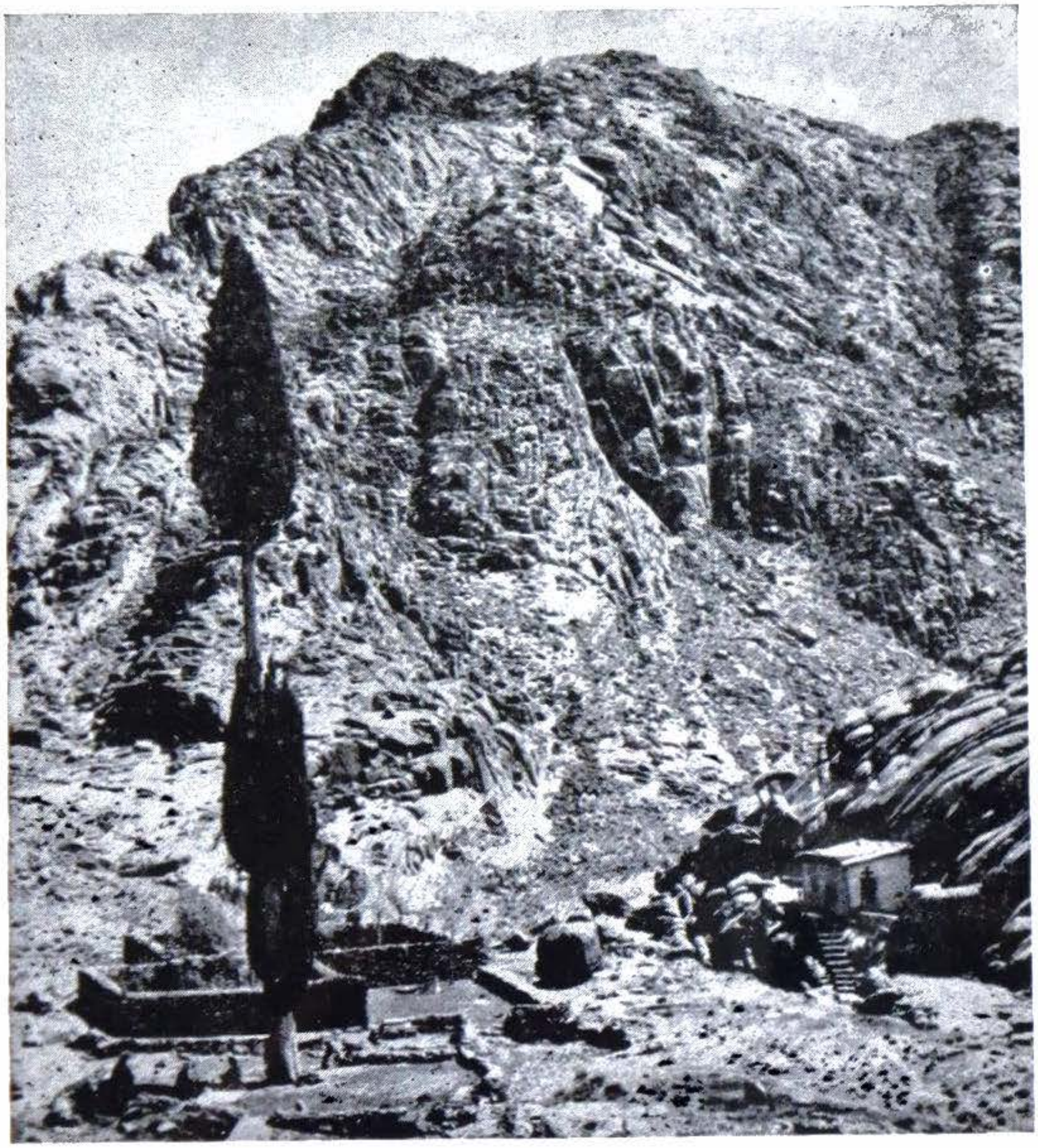
Another time Abba Martyrius, likewise taking St. John with him, went to the great John the Sabbaite, who was then staying in the desert of Gudda. Seeing them, the Elder rose, poured water, washed the feet of Abba John and kissed his hand; Abba Martyrius' feet, however, he did not wash, and later, when his disciple Stephen asked why he had acted thus, he answered: "Believe me, child, I do not know who this youth is; but I received the abbot of Sinai and washed the feet of the abbot."

Likewise also Abba Strategius, on the day of St. John's tonsure, prophesied concerning him that he would be a great luminary.

After the death of his preceptor, with whom he had remained in obedience for 19 years, St. John went off to the desert, where he spent 40 years in seclusion. As a man already old, at the age of 75, St. John was chosen abbot of Mount Sinai.

"On the very day that John was made our abbot," relates the same monk, "and when there had come to us about 600 visitors, and they all sat eating, John saw a man with short hair, dressed in the Jewish fashion in a white tunic, who walked about everywhere like some kind of manager and gave instructions to the cooks, economi, cellarers, and other officials. When the people had dispersed and the officials sat at table, they looked for this man who had been walking everywhere and giving instructions, but found him nowhere. Then the slave of God, our Father John, said to us: "Let him go; lord Moses did nothing strange in serving in his own place."

1. Further information on the monastery, its anchorites and martyrs, may be found in *The Orthodox Word*, 1965, vol. 1, no. 4.



*The summit of Mt. Sinai, seen from the plateau where the Lord God appeared to the Prophet Elias (III Kings 19: 4-18)*

On the Red Sea, two days' journey from Mt. Sinai, there existed in St. John's day the Monastery of Raithu, now in ruins, which was in constant and close contact with the Monastery of Mt. Sinai. The abbot and brethren of this monastery, knowing the spiritual height of St. John as a "truly great leader of all who have chosen the angelic life" of monasticism, begged him to write for them "a book like the divinely-written tablets of Moses, for the instruction of the New Israelites," a book which "like a ladder set up, will lead aspirants to the gate of heaven." In answer to their request, St. John wrote the book which has been of such great benefit to generations of Christians, known to all as the *Ladder*.

*St. John presents the* Ladder *to the monks of Raithu --*
*illustration from an ancient manuscript of the* Ladder

It is not known how long the Saint was abbot, but later, having left his brother George in his place, he again went off to be silent. It is likewise unknown at what age he reposed, although it is known that he was still alive in the year 600. He is commemorated by the Church on March 30, and, as a mark of the importance of his spiritual writings to the whole of the faithful, the Fourth Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to his memory.

# *The Ladder*

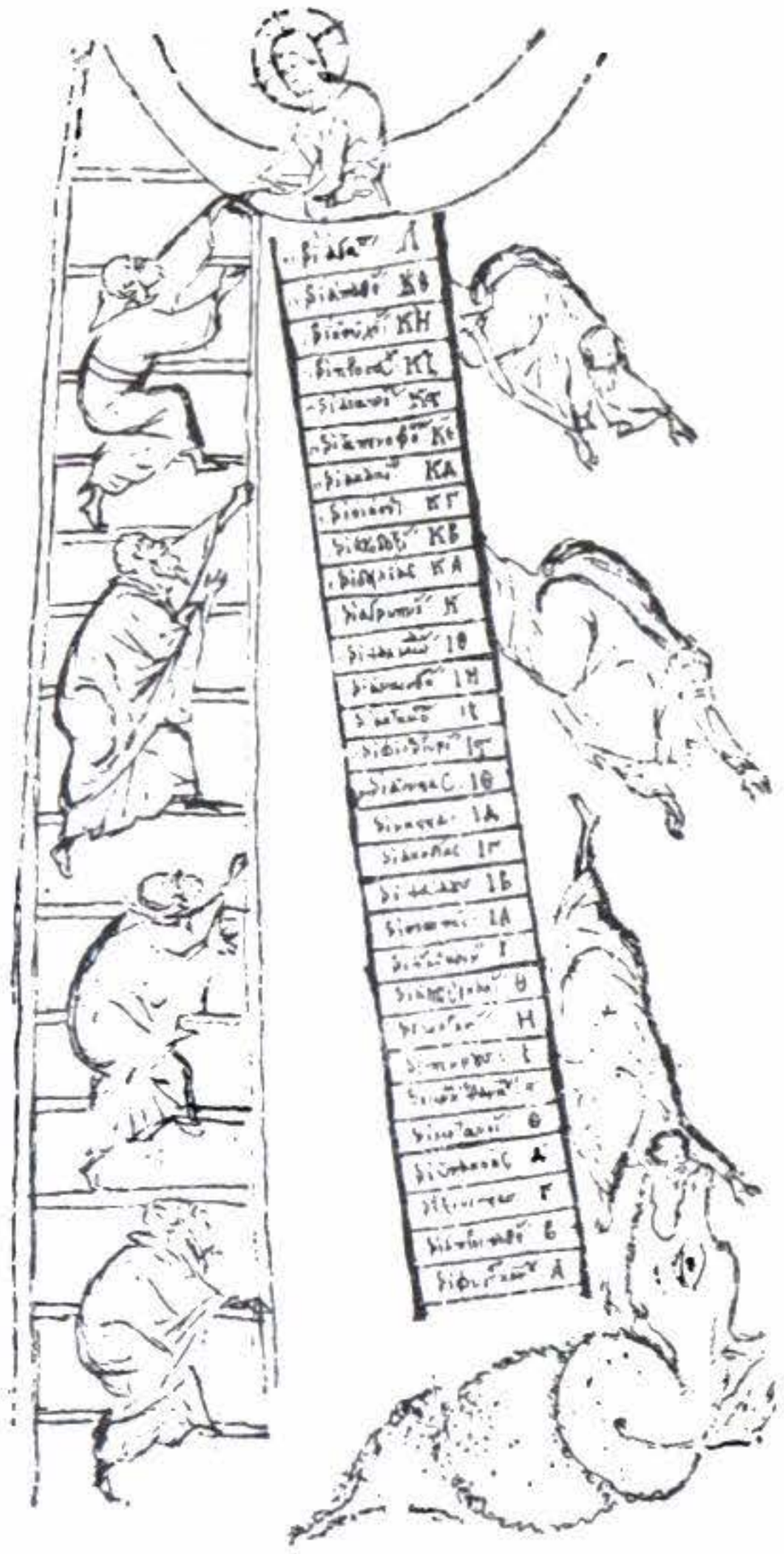
"TO ALL HASTENING to write their names in the book of life in the heavens, the present book is a surpassing path. Travelling by this path, we shall see that it infallibly guides those who follow its instructions, preserves them invulnerable to every obstacle and presents to us a firmly-based ladder leading us up from the earthly to the holy of holies, at the summit of which is the God of love."

This book was written for monks: "for the instruction of the New Israelites, newly departed from the mental Egypt and the sea of life." It is a guide for them and presents itself as a systematic account of the correct monastic path along the steps of spiritual growth.

The *Ladder* is written in "sentences" (instructions) in the form of aphorisms -- short phrases wherein much is said in a few words. Its language is simple, approaching the colloquial; it contains many comparisons drawn from the world, proverbs, sayings. Its sources are the Holy Scriptures, Sts. Evagrius, John Cassian, Pope Gregory the Great, George the Arselite, and others.

St. John leans upon tradition, upon his predecessors, upon the teaching of the "God-inspired Fathers"; but he speaks always only from his own *personal experience*.

In this *Ladder* there are 30 steps, corresponding to the 30 years of the Saviour's fullness of age. The book falls into two parts: the first concerning vices (ch. 1-23), and the second concerning virtues (ch. 24-30). The *Ladder* ends with an appendix, the *Homily to Pastors*, which teaches how a director of souls should be to his rational sheep. In it the obligations of an abbot are discussed.



*The Ladder of ascent to heaven -- from an ancient manuscript*

In ancient Russia the *Ladder* was a beloved book. There is a copy of the 12th century, and there were three translations in the 14th and 15th centuries. The *Ladder* was printed in 1647 and again in 1785, both from somewhat faulty translations, however. Finally, in the middle of the 19th century Optina Monastery, in the person of Starets Makary, undertook the publication and translation of the works of the Holy Fathers; altogether sixteen books appeared in the Optina editions.

Starets Makary personally labored much especially on the *Ladder* of St. John, which was published in 1854. For a foundation he took the translation of Starets Paissy Velichkovsky. Starets Makary compared and studied all the printed and manuscript editions of this work and compared these with the Greek text. The future renowned Starets Amvrossy of Optina was his helper in this.

Starets Makary strove to make the *Ladder* not only suitable for reading, but also accessible for practical guidance. At first the book appeared in semi-Slavonic, and later also in Russian. The translation into Russian, under the supervision of the Starets, was made by Fr. John Polovtsev (later Bishop Yuvenaly). Starets Makary himself compiled the alphabetical index of subjects, which is extremely useful for those using the *Ladder* for guidance in spiritual life.

An English translation of the *Ladder* (from Greek) has been made by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore (Faber & Faber, London, 1959).

## *THE TEACHING OF THE* LADDER

1. *RENUNCIATION OF THE WORLD.* Monasticism is a departure from the "fatherland," an unconditional renunciation. *Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house* (Gen. 12:1). This is a departure from that situation and those conditions of life in which a man finds himself in the world, a departure from temptations and distraction into a new situation and environment favorable for ascetic labors.

"Let him be your father who can and will labor with you for the overthrowing of the burden of your sins."

Thus the monk's first step is *renunciation of the world, i.e.,* renunciation of passions, predilections, and earthly attachments. Such a renunciation is accomplished through self-will or freedom, which is man's fundamental property. And ascetic labor is precisely a free, willing turning to God with a constant effort of the will in this aspiration.

"The monk is one who constantly forces his nature and unremittingly guards his senses."

But ascetic labor in itself has no value; it acquires value only when it becomes a means for the obtaining of a rightly established aim. And this aim can and must be only *union with God.* For this an unremitting zeal is necessary.

2. The path of ascetic labor lies through *OBEDIENCE.* One must renounce one's own will (but not one's freedom). "Obedience is the grave of one's own will and the resurrection of humility."

This is not, however, the extinction of freedom, but rather the transfiguration of the will, the overcoming of passion in one's own will, its purification and refinement, the leading of it into a higher state.

3. Before anything else one must choose for oneself a director or "elder," a *SPIRITUAL FATHER* to whom one is to entrust his salva-

tion. This is a most responsible step, on which depends the whole further fate of the one who chooses: success or failure in the spiritual life.

And therefore the choice must be made with every caution and good judgement, "lest we hit upon a a simple oarsman in place of a pilot, a sick man in place of a physician, an abyss in place of a landing-dock, and in this fashion find oneself a ready ruin."

Having chosen a director, one must submit oneself to him *absolutely*. One must neither test nor discuss his words and acts, and one must accept everything from him "as from the mouth of God," "even though it might be contrary to one's own reasoning, and those who are asked might not be very spiritual." "For God is not unjust and will not allow those souls to be deceived that have subjected themselves to the judgement and advice of another in faith and good will. And even if those who are asked do not have spiritual wisdom in themselves, there is still the Immaterial and Invisible Who speaks through them."

*St. John Climacus*
*(13th-century manuscript)*

"Unwavering faith is the door of dispassion" and even "freedom from care." Through obedience the will is freed from the possible errors of one's personal opinion and is freed from the power of the passions, and this is the path to *true freedom* through freely-willed slavery.

4. *REPENTANCE.* Ascetic labor is performed in *repentance* and in *remembrance of death*, which is bound up with it. Repentance is, as it were, a tasting beforehand of death, and even a "daily death."

This is a gift of God which is given only when there is a complete cutting off of one's will and entire absence of predilections.

Upon it follows "joy-creating" *lamentation.* "Repentance is a renewal of baptism... and a fount of tears after baptism which is greater than baptism," since lamentation is a constant purification from the sins one performs.

There are various stages of lamentation: lamentation that comes from fear, or lamentation that comes from mercifulness; and there is also a lamentation that comes from love.

"We shall not be accused, brethren, for not having performed miracles, for not being theologians, for not having attained visions; but without doubt we shall have to give an answer to God for not having wept constantly over our sins."

5. The acquirement of *DISPASSION*. Before anything else one must strive to overcome and succeed in overcoming in oneself the arousal and movement of the passions.

One should begin with the passion of *anger*, *i.e.*, "perturbation of the heart" or "irritation." One must acquire meekness, and with it peace and tranquillity. Anger is nourished by *self-love*, and *angerlessness*, on the contrary, is "an insatiable desire for dishonor," and *meekness* is "an unmoving disposition of soul, remaining the same both in honor and dishonor."

One must in every way flee from *judging*, and pray in secret for those who have sinned. "This form of love is pleasing to God." Judging is bound up with impudence and is incompatible with true repentance: "to judge is to impudently appropriate to oneself the rank of God."

One must not trust one's feelings, since because of his limitedness a man cannot know everything, and therefore his judgement is also relatively limited. "Even if you see with your own eyes that someone sins, do not judge, for the eyes also may be deceived."

It is essential to acquire *purity*, and on this theme St. John speaks a great deal. The source of purity is in the heart, and it is a gift of God.

*Love of money* is overcome by *non-acquirement* and complete "putting aside of cares for what is earthly," and by this means is attained freedom from sorrow and freedom from care, according to one's faith and hope (in God's Providence).

Especially must one avoid *pride*, since "he who puffs himself up becomes for himself his own demon and is tempted then without the latter."

One must strive for *humility*. In his words, this "nameless grace of the soul" is impossible to describe. It is recognized only in experience and one may learn it only from Christ: *Learn from Me*.

And the true humility of Christ may be born only in the soil of the unharmed teaching of Christ, and therefore only in *Orthodoxy*, for "it is not possible for flame to come from snow; it is even more impossible for the wisdom of humility to be in someone of another faith, or a

heretic. This correction belongs alone to those who are Orthodox, pious, and already purified." How few know this, even among Orthodox!

"Humility is the door to the Kingdom of Heaven, and it leads thither those who draw near to it. I think that the Saviour Himself speaks of those who enter by this door in these words: *He shall go in and out* without fear from this life, *and find pasture* and green grass in the dwellings of paradise. But all who have come to monasticism by another door are *thieves* of their own life *and robbers*" (St. John 10:8-9).

"Holy humility has the gift from God to raise one up [to produce fruit] thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. To the last step ascend only the dispassionate; to the middle, the courageous; but to the first step all may ascend."

"Many have received salvation without prophecies and shinings, without signs and miracles; but without humility no one enters the heavenly bridal chamber. For the guardian of the first [gifts] is the second [humility]. But often in light-minded people, through the first the second is annihilated."

6. *SOBRIETY.* Human nature is by its nature dispassionate. "There is no evil and there are no passions in man by *nature*, for God did not create passions." Sin is contrary to nature, and is a perversion of natural qualities, and this is why it may be uprooted.

In St. John of the Ladder we find already a complete psychological analysis of the development of the passions. Thus we see that passion may enter the heart only through "suggestion," *i.e.*, a thought, the form of an idea, a representation; and then it develops only with the *connivance of the will.*

On the foundation of these two laws there is also built the overcoming of the passions and the uprooting of evil habits.

Above everything one must strengthen the will through obedience and the suppression of arbitrariness, and then one's thought is purified through *sobriety*, which is indissolubly bound up with *prayer* -- this "mother of all virtues."

7. *PRAYER.* "Beat the foes with the name of Jesus, for there is no stronger weapon whether in heaven or on earth."

"Let the remembrance of death go to sleep with you, let it rise with you, and together with it the prayer of Jesus." It -- this "absolutely simple invocation of Jesus" -- is higher than all. Prayer should be short and simple.

Verbosity, however, distracts and may draw one into idle dreaming, and even into the "fancy of the feelings," which, like every form of "fantasy," one must strive in every way to suppress; for prayer is an "estrangement from the world, visible and *invisible*"-- an *immediate* striving toward God.

One must strive unceasingly toward prayer that acts in the heart, even in sleep: *I sleep, but my heart waketh* (Song of Songs 5: 2).

Spiritual prayer is a special gift of God, a certain inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and then already the Spirit Himself acts and prays in the heart. In the soul there begins to resound the voice of God Himself, directly revealing His will, and there flares up then a thirst for immortal beauty. And this condition is above every human learning. The ascetic enters already into the region of *sacred stillness*, the harmony of all powers and manifestations of the soul and body.

"Stillness (*hesychia*) of the body is the good state and good ordering of the bodily habits and feelings; stillness of the soul is the good state of one's thoughts, and an undistractable mind," and it, stillness, "without doubt bears the seal of the future age."

"Stillness is an unceasing service to God and a standing before Him." "He who has attained stillness has come to know the depth of the mysteries."

The motive power of ascetic labor (*podvig, ascesis*) is love, and it has degrees. Love of God is mysterious, "unknowable," and "unutterable": it is the path and the destination, and the name of God Himself.

Love and dispassion: these are different names for a single perfection.

On the highest steps St. John becomes more laconic and restrained. He speaks for beginners and for those in the middle stages.

For the mature, however, the spiritual world begins to open already directly. But apart from this, the highest conditions lend themselves with difficulty to description in human language. Words themselves become powerless. In the soul is revealed heaven, in which God dwells.

"And this blessed soul in itself bears the eternally-existing Word, Who is the seer of its mysteries, its preceptor and enlightener."

Here is the summit of the Ladder, which is hidden in the heights of heaven.

# ECUMENISM

By ARCHBISHOP VITALY
OF MONTREAL AND CANADA

A Report to the Sobor of Bishops of
the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

*Histories of ecumenism abound, and stalwart defences of the true Church of Christ against this modern heresy of heresies have appeared with increasing frequency in those few Orthodox publications still able and willing to express the truth. But perhaps not yet with such clarity and succinctness has the very essence of ecumenism been defined, its causes uncovered, the motives of its followers made clear, and its plan set forth, as in the present article. Originally delivered as an official report to the full Sobor (Council) of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in 1967, and revised this year in the light of the 1968 Assembly at Uppsala, it can rightfully take its place beside the very recent "Sorrowful Epistle" of Metropolitan Philaret to all Orthodox bishops in the world[1] as a final trumpet call to those who know and love Christ's Church to stand apart from the evil of these days and rise to defend the Church.*[2]

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT, which we now see in its definitive form with the "World Council of Churches" as its chief headquarters, as it were, with its elaborate network of organizations, has passed by stages through a gradual development.

In the first half of the last century its first predecessors appeared: in 1844 in London a certain George Williams founded the so-called YMCA, which at its golden jubilee in 1894 had succeeded in spreading throughout the entire world, and in 1952 counted as many as 10,000 branches with four million members. The founder of this society was himself awarded the Order of Chivalry by Queen Victoria.

Eleven years after the foundation of the YMCA, two women's societies were organized in England -- in the south of England a certain Miss Emma Robarts founded a circle with the purpose of meeting for prayer, and in London Lady Kinnerd founded a society for young ladies

1. Complete English text in *Orthodox Life* (Jordanville, N.Y.), July-August, 1969, and in the "St. Nectarios Educational Series" (Seattle, Wash.).

2. Text translated from the Russian in the periodical published by Archbishop Vitaly's "Monastery Press" in Montreal: *Orthodox Observer*, June, 1969, pp. 14-30.

with the purpose of practical philanthropy. In 1894 these two societies were merged into one and began to be called by the name already known to all, of YWCA: Young Women's Christian Association.

Although neither the YMCA nor the YWCA had any kind of dogma of its own, still, by their diffuse, hazy, already semi-Christian ideology they created whole cadres of people with a world-view of a purely humanitarian character, with a faith in the organic goodness of human nature in the spirit of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Tolstoy, a world-view in which there was no room, naturally, for any idea either of original sin or of the salvation to be found exclusively in the Church of Christ. To achieve such results a special tactic was employed, acting in two directions: on the one hand, special attention was directed to the development of the body, and under the appearance of preserving health and observing hygiene, there was imperceptibly established a cult of the flesh. On the other hand the soul was educated within the strict framework of emotionality, of sensuousness, with a light-minded attitude toward sin, with playful irony toward the truth of Christian dogmas, encouraging the contemporary view of philanthropy as the distribution of earthly goods not in the name of Christ. Toward pious, church-oriented Christians in these two organizations there was developed a condescendingly-patronizing attitude, as toward good but stupid aud unreasonable children. In such a fashion, several generations were raised in pseudo-Christianity.

In 1910, at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh (Scotland), for the first time the word *ecumenism* was employed in its contemporary sense; at the same time a new society was founded with the title, Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, which met in 1925 in Stockholm and in 1937 in Oxford, for the study of mutual relations among the various Christian churches.

Parallel to this movement, there was organized yet another new society under the name of World Conference on Faith and Order, which met twice, in 1927 in Lausanne, and in 1937 in Edinburgh, and set as its aim to bring to light all obstacles to the union of the churches in the sphere of doctrine.

Finally, in 1937, at the two subsequent conferences in Oxford and Edinburgh, it was decided to unite these two movements into one organization -- the "World Council of Churches." The Second World War, however, prevented this organization from undertaking the realization of its aims, but after the war, in 1948, the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches was convoked in Amsterdam, and three Assemblies

have followed it: Evanston in 1954, New Delhi in 1961, and Uppsala (Sweden) in 1968.

This brief description of the historical origin of the ecumenical movement would not be complete if we did not mention also the world organization of Boy Scouts, founded also in England in 1908 by Lord Baden Powell. This organization solely for youth, now known to all by its activity, set as its aim to educate youth in an interconfessional, cosmopolitan spirit, with an ideal of human goodness. These three organizations are to the present day the three pillars upon which the whole ecumenical movement rests, and from which it constantly fills up the cadres of its confederates, workers, and simply the mass of people who sympathize with it.

LET US CONSIDER now what psychological, social, political, and spiritual causes favored the appearance and development of ecumenism. As the cornerstone of this Tower of Babylon in-the-making, it is essential to place the complete spiritual decomposition of the Protestant heresy. But if we say together with Tertullian that "the human soul is by nature Christian," which at that time, in the mouth of this Western teacher of the Church, meant indisputably "by nature Orthodox,"--then we can affirm that every heresy by its nature is offensive to the human soul, and sooner or later the human soul must get this heresy out of its system, cast it out of itself. Thus we are witnessing the disgorging of the Protestant heresy; but since in the spiritual world just as in nature there is no vacuum, so the place of this heresy is taken over by ecumenism.

Together with this phenomenon, one should mention the murder of the Imperial Family, the annihilation of the Russian Orthodox Empire which restrained the evil[1] that now without hindrance is poured out over the whole terrestrial globe. Never during the presence in Europe of the Orthodox Russian State could ecumenism have developed with such a rapid pace, seizing already in its nets all Local Orthodox Churches.

A third cause -- the most ominous, in our opinion -- is the consolidation throughout the world of masonry, which strives to become a secret world government and which in every way aids, inspires, and finances ecumenism.

In the journal *Le Temple*, published in Paris, the official organ of Scottish-Rite Masonry, in the article "The Union of the Churches" (no.

1. *The mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one...* (II Thes. 2:7-8). Concerning the idea of the Orthodox Empire as the power that restrains the appearance of Antichrist until the epoch of apostasy, see *The Orthodox Word*, 1968, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 155ff (*Tr. note*).

3, Sept.-Oct., 1946), masonry itself gives the following acknowledgement of its success:

"We are asked why we enter into disputes of a religious nature, to what extent questions of the union of the churches, ecumenical congresses, *etc.*, can present any interest for masonry. In the bosom of our workshops all doctrines are studied in order that no kind of *apriorism* may enter into our conclusions. Descartes, Leibnitz, the determinism of Jean Rostand, *etc.* -- everything in which there is some portion of truth interests us. And it is desired that we have no interest in the problem of the evolution of Christian thought! Even if we attempted to forget that masonry has a religious origin, all the same the very fact of the existence of religions would call forth in us a constant endeavor to bind in unity all mortals, in that unity of which we always dream. The problem raised by the plan of the union of the churches that confess Christ closely interests masonry and is akin to masonry, since it contains in itself the idea of universalism. And let us be permitted to add that if this union, at least as concerns the non-Roman confessions, stands on the right path, for this it is obliged to our Order."

Here is an acknowledgement that reveals to us what it is that is the heart of the entire ecumenical movement.

AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL cause that prepared the ground for the successful dissemination of ecumenism, there is likewise the whole rather prolonged epoch of the reign of the English Queen Victoria.

This epoch, with its own special ethics that held the human personality artificially in a spiritual encasement, not healing the passions but driving them into the depths, greatly wearied the Protestant world. This cult of external form made of Protestantism a spiritual compressor of the passions and it, after the death of the Queen -- unquestionably a powerful personality -- burst and destroyed not only the form-casing of the Protestant world-view, but also what remained of its meager dogmatism.

Thus the YMCA, YWCA, and Scoutism, founded and organized by masonry, prepared whole generations of people[1] with a special de-

1. The importance of these organizations in the preparation especially of the leaders of the ecumenical movement is confirmed in one of the standard histories of ecumenism: "...Study the World Council of Churches' platform at Amsterdam and other such ecumenical assemblies; four-fifths of those assembled on these platforms probably owed their ecumenical inspiration to some connection with the YMCA, with the YWCA, or with the closely-connected Student Christian Movement." (*A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, SPCK, London, 1967, p. 327.) (*Trans. note.*)

Christianized world-view, thanks to which there could arise also the World Council of Churches, which in fact honors itself as the True Church and in its four world Assemblies, pseudo-Ecumenical Councils, has expressed its credo as well.

These four world Assemblies were: Amsterdam, 1948; Evanston, 1954; New Delhi (India), 1961; and Uppsala (Sweden), 1968. Each Assembly has published its acts, from which one may, not without a little effort, bring to light the main points of this pseudo-Christianity. One should, in the first place, note immediately that each conference proceeded under the direction of some principal idea. Thus the Amsterdam Assembly chose as its theme "Human Disorder and God's Design." The Evanston Assembly was conducted under the watchword "Christ, the only hope of the world." The conference in New Delhi proclaimed as its motto "Jesus Christ -- the Light of the World." All these ideas are lacking a concrete basis in theology; they have in themselves nothing doctrinal, nothing dogmatic. They may be interpreted by every Christian religion, each in its own way; there is opened a wide field for wordy debate, an immense opportunity to think without ever thinking anything out, without reaching anything, without coming to any conclusion. Above everything there reigns a fear of dogma. All these ideas are in fact slogans, and if one calls to mind that none of the Assemblies has had its permanent president, but that a secretary is in charge of everything, these Assemblies resemble rather the sessions of a League of Nations or a U.N. for spiritual questions: the same cosmopolitanism, the same vagueness of principles, the same Babylon. Of all four Assemblies, the most successful faom the point of view of ecumenism was the one in New Delhi, where the atmosphere of Hindu mysticism in this Mid-Eastern country with its yogis and the particular Hindu lyricism, a cloudy mystique, brought many participants of the conference into ecstasy.

The Assembly in Uppsala took as its motto the words of the Saviour: "Behold, I make all things new."

However, in studying the acts of these Assemblies, one may see in them a consistent plan and a definite aim. The richest ideologically was indisputably the first Assembly in Amsterdam. At it every effort was applied to destroy the doctrine of the one, true, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, historically living and militant on the earth and triumphant in heaven. The five most prominent theologians of the Protestant world presented each his own lecture. In their midst was also the Orthodox Russian theologian, Fr. Georges Florovsky.

The first speaker, Gustave Aulen, entitled his lecture "The Church in the light of the New Testament." To all appearances, and according to his description of the characteristics of the Church, it would appear at first that all his judgements are completely Orthodox; but one is immediately sobered by his indication that all Christians are members of this Church which he so well describes. The Church is, as it were, a synthesis of all churches.

Prof. Clarence Craig translates the word *catholic* -- or, in Church Slavonic, *sobornaya* -- by the word *integral*. Thus one may say with the ecumenists: I believe in One, holy, integral, apostolic Church, that is to say, the Church of the World Council of Churches. Continuing his arguments, the professor says further: "The Church united the Apostle Paul and the holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew. For the former Christ was the end of the Law; for the Apostle Matthew, Christ was the founder of a new law. The Church equally agreed with the moralism of the Apostle James and the mysticism of the Apostle John the Divine. If in the first century there was room in her for such divergences, then there must be a place today also in the Church for a great variety of expressions. This diversity belongs to the nature of the Church's organism." Prof. Craig deliberately calls these various gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles "divergences," whereas it was precisely divergences that the holy Apostles never had.

Prof. John Gregg adds nothing new, but he does even more sharply abolish the boundaries of the Church of Christ, calling that in which he includes all Christians of all persuasions "the Great Church."

The well-known pro-Communist professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Basel, Karl Barth, who in the same year of 1948 at one of his lectures affirmed that "the only hope for Christians to survive in the present age is to find ways of amalgamating with the most vital current of today -- world Communism," very realistically criticizes the contemporary (of course, Protestant) world, but unfortunately he applies his criticism as if it were to the whole of Christianity, being completely ignorant of Holy Orthodoxy and its grace-giving life. "The Bible," he says, "dogmatics, catechesis, church discipline, liturgy, preaching and sacrament have become museum exhibits." He sees the only salvation in the reviving of the Church in the ecumenical movement. Fr. G. Florovsky pays his dues to ecumenism by affirming, like the other professors, that the Church has not yet defined itself, has not yet worked out its theological-school definition, has not somehow come to know itself.

By this these professors wish to say that for the definition of the Church no formula has been found; but Fr. Florovsky should have said in all honesty that for no single dogma is there a formula. There is the teaching of the Holy Church on every dogma, including the dogma of the Church itself, but there is no formula, as this exists in the exact sciences of mathematics, chemistry, and physics.

Having established the fact of the absence of such a formula, ecumenists think that they have now a legal right to create their own conception of the Church, and they have formulated it as a synthesis of all existing churches. This is how an Orthodox priest has served the idea of ecumenism, and this priest has sinned cunningly by a dishonest conception.

THE SECOND ASSEMBLY, in Evanston, was the most colorless from the viewpoint of ecumenism. Its aim was, after the destruction of the dogma of the true, or as they call us, historical Church, to unite all churches that come to them. The reports at the Evanston Assembly are uninteresting, without content; they rather repeat in other forms the same ideas that were expressed at Amsterdam. The teachings of all Christian churches were analyzed and from each there was brought to light that which makes it a part of this universal ecumenical "Great Church."

One should note, however, one very interesting fact that occurred at this Assembly. For the first time Communism was subjected to criticism from the Christian viewpoint; but even this, to all appearances a positive phenomenon, was rather a fine bit of politics on the part of the directors of the Assembly, who skillfully threw this bone to the Moscow Communists. The maneuver was fully successful, and at the next Assembly of the W.C.C. the Communists compelled the unfortunate Moscow Patriarchate to take part, in order through the mouths of their hierarchs, if not to defend Communism, then in any case to give no opportunity to all the Christians gathered there to raise the question of their persecution of Christianity.

If we recall how the Moscow Patriarchate replied to the invitation to take part in the first ecumenical Assembly, we shall be convinced that its participation in the New Delhi Assembly comprises a slave-like obedience to the Communist Party.

At the Moscow Council of 1948 Archpriest G. Razumovsky was commissioned to reply to the invitation. Here is the text of this reply:

"The Russian Orthodox Church has not taken part and does not take part in a single ecumenical meeting or conference... We are hesitant in determining the causes why representatives of the Church of Constantinople in the ecumenical field of activity, where meetings have been accompanied by joint prayer, have not refused to participate in it. Or has the Patriarchate of Constantinople forgotten its honor as first among Sees in the defense of the canons of the Orthodox Church and not maintained its authority?..."

Quoting then citations from ecumenical reports to the effect that ecumenism is an actual Ecumenical Pentecost, Fr. G. Razumovsky continues:

"The Russian Orthodox Church has always taught and teaches that Pentecost, *i.e.*, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, has already occurred, and that Christians should await now not a new manifestation of the Holy Spirit, but the glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The belittling of the significance of the unique Sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the foretelling of a future "third hour" in which will be revealed the awaited Kingdom of the Holy Spirit, are characteristic of the teaching of masons and sectarians, and the newly-revealed prophecy of the awaited Ecumenical Pentecost is but an old echo of the false preaching of these seducers."

The resolution concludes with the words:

"We inform the World Council of Churches, in reply to the invitations received by all of us to take part in the Amsterdam Assembly in the capacity of members of it, that all Local Orthodox Churches participating in the present Meeting are compelled to refuse to participate in the Ecumenical Movement in its present form." The resolution was signed by the heads of the Russian, Georgian, Serbian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Polish, Albanian and Czechoslovakian Churches and by representatives of the Churches of Antioch and Alexandria.

After such a devastating resolution by the Moscow Patriarchate with regard to the World Council of Churches, one may understand the enthusiasm that seized all participants of the New Delhi Assembly when they accepted, as full members of ecumenism, the Moscow Patriarchate and with it the Rumanian, Bulgarian, and Polish Churches. In 1968 there entered into the W.C.C. likewise the last of all the Local Churches--the Serbian Church. Thus all Local Orthodox Churches, except for our Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, are now members of the ecumenical movement. As far as Orthodoxy is concerned, the World Council of Churches has completed the cycle of its activity. The whole Communist Block, headed by the Moscow Patriarchate, is already re-

presented there. All the untruths of the world have been gathered together. There was created at the New Delhi Assembly for the first time in the history of mankind a single common front of all heresies and untruths. In the World Council of Churches, as in a kind of conjurer's trick, have been joined and united all blasphemies, errors, and oppositions to Truth of the whole spiritual history of the human race from Cain and Ham to Judas the betrayer, Karl Marx, the corrupter Freud, and all the lesser and greater blasphemers contemporary to us today. Such is the dismal apotheosis of this Assembly.

If it were possible somehow to represent artistically this sinister triumph, it would have to be performed to the strains of Saint-Saens' *Danse macabre*.

FINALLY, THE LAST Assembly at Uppsala chose for its motto the words of the Saviour: "Behold, I make all things new"... words that gave the Holy Fathers an inexhaustible source of theological ideas. In the mouths of the participants of the Uppsala Assembly, however, this Gospel dictum was almost exclusively applied to every kind of social, charitable, public, class, and sometimes industrial questions.

It should be noted that at this Assembly there were 140 delegates from all Local Orthodox Churches, not counting their advisors, translators, and secretaries. The Moscow delegation numbered 35 delegates of episopal and priestly rank, headed by Metropolitan Nikodim. The Church of Greece this time sent to the Assembly only two lay representatives, and they left the Assembly before the end of all the sessions. Their conduct was officially explained by the fact that in Uppsala several demonstrations were put on by the Swedish youth protesting against the present Greek military government. But as a matter of fact the Church of Greece is all the time forced to take a backward look at the constantly growing movement of Old Calendarists; and if one adds to this the fact that the majority of the Orthodox delegates, apart from certain complete apostates from Orthodoxy, always feel themselves awkward, uncomfortable, hampered at the sessions of all ecumenical gatherings, then one may boldly say that these two representatives of the Church of Greece were happy to leave this Assembly under such a plausible pretext.

It would not be superfluous to underline here with what caution the chief leadership of the ecumenical movement treats in general the Orthodox delegates. Having noted almost from the first Assembly how the Orthodox delegates feel themselves not at home, are unable to give themselves over entirely to ecumenism and always somewhere in the depths of their conscience are tormented because of their enforced participation in ecumenism, the leadership of this movement, having finally

gathered in Uppsala all the representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, commenced with regard to them a very subtle politics of training, taming, and gradually attracting this not yet extinguished Orthodox conscience, in order to melt it in its ecumenical furnace. Despite the fact that on this occasion at Uppsala there was gathered the greatest number of Orthodox delegates, at all the general meetings not a single address was made by any of them. All delegates having been assigned to various committees, the Orthodox delegates were in fact being trained to ecumenism by the fact that they were obliged to sign all decisions and resolutions without saying a word, being silent also with regard to their consciences, which probably in such circumstances did not cause their masters much suffering. This politics one may call the politics of lulling the conscience.

At the very opening of the Assembly at Uppsala, there was read on behalf of all those gathered an ecumenical prayer, which went as follows: "O God, Father, You can make all things new. We entrust ourselves to You: help us to live for others, for Your love is stretched out upon all men; to seek the Truth, which we have not known..." How did Orthodox people feel listening to these last words?! It would have been curious to look then at the faces of the Orthodox hierarchs, who with all the Protestants, sectarians, and Catholics -- who also were represented this time -- declared in the hearing of all that they also have not known the Truth. Every priest of ours from the most out-of-the-way village knows the Truth by experience, standing at the altar of God and praying to God in spirit and in truth. Even the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, which is fully subjected to the censureship of the Communist Party, in citing in its account of this Assembly the words of the prayer did not, nonetheless, dare to translate the English word "Truth" as *istina*, but translated it by *pravda*, "rightness." However, everyone well understood that in the present case the text of the prayer without any kind of ambiguity whatever spoke of Truth.

Perhaps the Orthodox hierarchs had recourse during the opening of the Assembly to the old Jesuit practice of *reservatio mentalis*; but in such a case, if all these delegates do not repent of the sin of participating in prayer with heretics, they may be considered as being on a completely false path of apostasy from the Truth of Orthodoxy.

HAVING BROUGHT to light the essence of all four ecumenical Assemblies, let us proceed now to an examination of their inspirer, *i.e.*, ecumenism, so as to see in essence the contours of this phenomenon.

Ecumenism is the heresy of heresies, because until now every separate heresy in the history of the Church has striven itself to stand in the place of the true Church, while the ecumenical movement, having united all heresies, invites them all together to honor themselves as the one true Church. Here ancient Arianism, Monophysitism, Monotheli-tism, Iconoclasm, Pelagianism, and simply every possible superstition of the contemporary sects under completely different names, have united and charge to assault the Church. This phenomenon is undoubtedly of an apocalyptic character. The devil has fought in turn, almost in sequence, with Christ's Truth set forth in the Nicaean Symbol of Faith, and has come now to the final and most vitally important paragraph of the Creed: "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." We say the most important, because all the truths set forth in the Creed are brought into life in the final paragraph, are realized in the Church of Christ, Which gives us not only the true Orthodox Teaching, but also grace-bestowing power to realize these truths, to live by them, only in the Church and through the Church. The Church, as Archhishop Hilarion says in his work, *There Is No Christianity without the Church*,[1] is not a dream of the Church, but life in Christ.

Ecumenism, striving to destroy the boundaries of the Church of Christ, itself has no boundaries whatever. Already there is talk not only of uniting with all Christians and even with Jews, but that everyone living on the earth is a member of the Church. The same Karl Barth prophesies the "imminent ruin of the *Corpus Christianum*" and says that "we have come to the epoch of the end of time, when there unfolds the last phase of the history of the relation between God and man, and it will be crowned, not with a Last Judgement as the Orthodox Church teaches, but with a complete reconciliation, which will occur between God and all creation."

If we look at the inner life of all the Protestant churches and at what ecumenism is introducing into them, we shall immediately see two currents of thought and life. The overwhelming majority of Protestant groups, having discarded their heretical doctrine and, not feeling in themselves any further stimulus so as to find anew in their religion their centrifugal force, give themselves over to ecumenism. They are completely indifferent to their one-time world-view, which was nurtured with blood and suffering, and they represent from within themselves an im-

1. An important theological treatise in the form of letters from exile, written by a new martyr of the Communist Yoke who spent six years in the infamous concentration camp established by the Soviets at Solovetsky Monastery, and died in the USSR in 1929. This work was published by Archbishop Vitaly, the author of this article, in Sao Paolo, Brazil, in 1954 (*Ed. note.*)

mense mass of people who are indifferent to Christ. A second contrary manifestation is sometimes to be noted, but it is always very small in numbers or even purely personal -- this is the rare individuals in the Protestant world who from a simple feeling of self-preservation do not wish yet simply to melt into the impersonal and bloodless mass and convert into a corpse what used to be Western Christianity. To these latter the wise men of ecumenism employ a refined tactic of fishermen, letting out a line to some freedom-loving community, in order later to draw it in to the fatal ecumenical shore.

To us Orthodox these Christians are nearer, even if they are in error, but still burning in their false faith, still preserving some signs of life.

Theologically ecumenism does not bear up under any kind of criticism, because it runs away from any kind of dogmatics of its own. It is spread not in the depths, but along the surface, along the layers of heresies which have outlived themselves; but it is supported by some secret resilient power which itself stands in the shadows. Behind it is likewise a vast material might with a clever politics of finance, skillfully giving help or by its gifts inclining to its side of the scale someone who is wavering or has not lost his sensitivity of conscience.

In its external structure the World Council of Churches is very like the League of Nations or the present organization of the United Nations with its Secretary General. Without wishing at all to indicate the times and seasons, which are all in God's Right Hand, we may only suppose that Antichrist will preside over both organizations, but in spirit the closer, more kin to him will be the World Council of Churches.

## CONCLUSION AND RESOLUTIONS

ECUMENISM is now at the very doors of our Church. All local Orthodox Churches have become its members, the last being the Serbian Church which was accepted in 1968. If until today ecumenism has not been dangerous for us, now the situation has changed somewhat, first of all because we have remained the only Church in the whole world that has not entered the W.C.C., and in all probability special steps will be undertaken for us, a special tactic will be employed. We must be ready for this. Second, unquestionably a strong attack will be made on the mass of our believers, among whom there are not a few souls, some of whom will yield being seduced by the thought of union, fearing their isolation, and others being tempted by advantages, a better situation, in a word by the golden calf.

If, as we indicated above, the ecumenical movement was prepared by a special world-view of pseudo-Christianity with total indifference to its truth in the bosom of the YMCA, YWCA, Scoutism, and other similar organizations, then the same role of spiritual enfeeblement has been played in our Orthodox world by the scholastic teaching of the schools -- a cold, soulless, only speculative examination of the holy truths of Christian teaching, in which there is a complete absence of any indication of the moral side of each dogma. And the moral teaching of the dogmas is that which captivates, interests, enlivens and shocks the soul equally of seminarian, believing layman, learned man and simple folk. Without this moral side of each dogma the whole science of theology loses the very ground under it and becomes like one of the secular disciplines and even less interesting than they, because, for example, physics and chemistry have to do with things concrete and tangible, while the poor seminarian does not see for himself personally the spiritual reality in every dogma without its moral side.

As a result of such an instruction in this most important theological science there could come out of the seminaries Stalin, Mikoyan, and in all probability not a few members of the Cheka [Soviet Secret Police]. The poor instructor of dogmatic theology did not even suspect that he was preparing a future monster. Indeed, was he personally to blame when such was the system and such it remains to this day? Today, however, in our Holy Trinity Seminary [in Jordanville, N.Y.], dogmatic theology becomes spirited, becomes the power of the whole grace-giving atmosphere of the monastery, its labor of prayer and fasting.

If ecumenism will begin to fill its ranks with our Orthodox Christians, who will be indifferent to the truths of our teaching, for this indifference we alone shall be to blame.

The Holy Fathers deliberately placed the Nicaeo-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith in the Divine Liturgy and other daily services as a prayer, in order to bind the entire Orthodox teaching of faith, expressed with such perfect, ideal brevity, in a real tie with our soul, to make the Creed life and not an abstract teaching. The Holy Fathers by this teach us that with the Lord God there can be communion only in prayer, that concerning the Lord God one must not reason with our intellect alone, but must contemplate with all the powers of our soul -- mind, heart and will, in prayer and faith. The Symbol of Faith is not our declaration of our doctrine, not our memorandum of the faith, but a labor of prayer on the part of all the powers of our soul.

It is time for us, in all our textbooks of dogmatic theology, to add to the essential, characteristic marks of Orthodox Christian dogmatics (theologicalness, Divine-revealedness, and Church-orientedness) *prayerfulness*, so as to bind all dogmas immediately to our soul. When the Holy Fathers teach us their doctrine, they do this from the fullness of their life, which is penetrated with prayer. All their dicta were acquired by them, if one may say so, in prayer and contemplation, and not from the intellectual syllogisms of the analytical mind. In the merely speculative study of dogma which was practiced in our seminaries and academies is hidden a subtle pride interwoven with a subtle vein of blasphemy. I recall how one of the disciples of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), after an inspired talk of the great Abba concerning the dogma of the Holy Trinity, exclaimed: "Vladika, after your explanation of the dogma one wants to weep from emotion."

With the intellect alone one may arrive at blasphemy, and examining holy truths by it alone may find oneself at one table with the Protestants in their dialogue with God.

The prayer-imbued power of our faith in dogmatic truth is a genuine source for us of moral power which comes out from each dogma. This is true to such an extent that if we prayerfully believe in the omnipotence of God, we are clothed, according to God's mercy to our entreaty, in the power of God in the measure accessible to us. If we prayerfully believe in the omniscience of God, we receive, according to God's mercy to our entreaty and to the degree of our purification, knowledge, wisdom, and judgement. Thus from each dogmatic truth we prayerfully receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In other words, upon a correct labor of faith and prayer depends a correct life, life in Christ, life in the Church.

We likewise prayerfully believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church, and at the same time lightmindedly affirm here that in other churches too there are the holy sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism. Where, then, is our faith in the One, that is, *only*, exclusive Church, the exclusive, only preserver of all sacraments?! But here I wish to offer the following resolution.

We must ourselves discard, definitively have done with a certain deeply-penetrating -- to our good fortune, only in our minds -- scholastic ecumenism. I say scholastic and mental only, because to any sound-thinking Orthodox person the idea could not occur to receive communion in a Protestant or Catholic church, and this because with all his being, organically, he knows with an inner infallible knowledge that there is no holy Communion anywhere but in the Church of Christ.

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